Opportunities for improving NRM governance in Victoria

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Opportunities for improving NRM governance in Victoria

A report of a systemic co-inquiry 2015-2017

Report No. 138

Moragh Mackay
Ross Colliver
Phillip J. Wallis
Ray Ison
Seanna Davidson
Catherine Allan

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A report of a systemic co-inquiry 2015-2017

Moragh Mackay; Ross Colliver; Philip J. Wallis; Ray Ison; Seanna Davidson; Catherine Allan

With substantive contribution from Laura Mumaw, Nadine Gaskell, Helen Corney and Peter Greig

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A NOTE ON THIS REPORT

Systemic co-inquiry is collaborative inquiry which draws on systems theories, methodologies and techniques. The systemic co-inquiry of this report was initiated by Moragh Mackay, a Landcare facilitator undertaking PhD research through Charles Sturt University. Moragh's PhD research included co-inquiry with Landcare networks in the Corangamite region, from which participants concluded that most of the opportunities they developed needed State level support to prosper.

A consortium of researchers with professional linkages– Mackay, Colliver, Wallis, Ison, Davidson and Allan, gained seed funding from the Institute for Land, Water and Society to start a new round of inquiry titled the Systemic Inquiry into NRM Governance in Victoria. The expanded group of co-inquirers styled themselves the 'Lonsdale Group' after the setting for the first workshop,

The philanthropic Helen Macpherson Smith Trust supported the final three workshops of the initial round of inquiry. The report presented in the following pages is the report provided to the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust as part of the funding arrangement, hence it covers 2015-2017.

Activities from the Systemic Inquiry into NRM Governance in Victoria continue, and ILWS is publishing the following report as a publicly available record of the first round of activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many organisations and individuals have invested their valuable ideas, time and effort into the Lonsdale Group.

We thank Charles Sturt University for funding workshop 1 and the Victorian Landcare Council for funding workshop 2, enabling the inquiry to get started.

We particularly thank the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust for taking a chance and funding workshops 3, 4 and 5, and enabling the inquiry to thrive. Ten per cent of the grant was used to provide support to community participants for attending workshops.

Monash University hosted the inquiry and provided substantial in-kind support, as did Charles Sturt University and The Training and Development Group.

Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority and Corangamite Catchment Management Authority were partners in the initiative and provided in-kind support through participation by Board members and senior staff in workshops and follow-on activities.

The Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning encouraged participation by senior staff in workshops and follow-on activities, and invited the group to make a pitch.

Participants from four Corangamite region community-based Landcare Networks, including Upper Barwon, Southern Otways, Surf Coast & Inland Plains & Otway Agroforestry Networks contributed. In Port Phillip, participants from the Western Port Catchments Landcare Network and local government Knox City Council joined the inquiry.

We also acknowledge participants from Victorian Landcare Council, Norman Wettenhall Foundation, Victorian Catchment Management Council, National NRM Chairs Group, RMIT University, Victorian Environment Friends Network, Knox Environment Society, The Open University UK, Burke Road Billabong Reserve, Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation, Natural Resources Conservation League, and the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Victoria.

Project meetings were held at the Inspire9 co- working space. Workshops were held at the Donkey Wheel House and catering was provided by Kinfolk Café.

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OVERVIEW

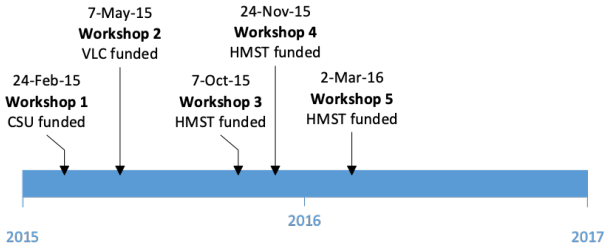
The Lonsdale Systems Group is a community of people interested in improving natural resource management (NRM) in Victoria. Participants come from a diverse range of backgrounds, including private landholders, Landcare groups, state government, regional NRM agencies, local government, academia, and community volunteers.

The group's name was adopted following the first workshop in February 2015 at the Monash University Law Chambers on Lonsdale Street in Melbourne.

Over 12 months, five workshops were held under the banner of a systemic co-inquiry into NRM governance in Victoria. A systemic co-inquiry is a facilitated process that brings people together around a situation of concern using systems practices. The process is designed to enable emergence of ideas and opportunities for improving the situation (See diagram on Page 9).

The systemic co-inquiry was supported by researchers and facilitators Moragh Mackay, Ross Colliver, Ray Ison, Catherine Allan, Philip Wallis and Seanna Davidson. Collectively, the team has decades of experience in process design and facilitation using systems thinking.

Nearly 50 participants are now engaged in exploring the systems of NRM governance they are involved in; to better understand how things work now, to explore opportunities for improvement and to negotiate and undertake actions to achieve that improvement. Joint monitoring, evaluation and adaptation of these actions is also being done along the way.



SUMMARY OF WORKSHOPS

In **Workshop 1** (24th February 2015) twenty-three participants identified seven opportunities to improve NRM governance in Victoria across local, regional, state and federal levels. We drew rich pictures to help explain some of the complexity we experience when we do NRM governance. We identified themes from our pictures that were prominent and recurring across many people's experiences. Throughout the whole workshop we learnt about and deepened our appreciation of each other's perspectives and experiences. The workshop was supported by funding from Charles Sturt University.

In **Workshop 2** (7th May 2015) a more in-depth exploration of regional NRM governance occurred. DELWP Secretary Adam Fennessy addressed participants at the workshop and endorsed the workshop aims and process. He also praised the supporting organisations. Twenty-two participants joined six co-inquiry groups to map out features of the NRM governance system, as they perceived it, and sought to locate where purposeful action might lead to improvements. They identified leverage points where change could bring about improvements or better ways to govern. New definitions of systems they felt embraced these better ways to govern were developed by each group. The workshop was supported with funding from the Victorian Landcare Council.

Following the second workshop, the facilitation team was successful in applying for a small community grant from the philanthropic Helen Macpherson Smith Trust. Funding from the HMS Trust enabled a further three events to turn the identified areas of opportunity into tangible proposals for further funding.

In **Workshop 3** (7th October 2015), twenty-nine participants began to consolidate their ideas and describe areas of opportunity in more detail. At this stage, four ideas emerged as pilot proposals for further investment, relating to: (1) operationalizing the Victorian biodiversity strategy; (2) integrating NRM planning at all scales; (3) co-designing the partnership between community and government; and (4) creating a common language for measuring NRM. Systems definitions were created for each, serving to explain the why, what and how of the improvements participants would like to create.

At **Workshop 4** (24th November 2015), participants began by re-visiting the system definitions created in Workshop 3. Each co-inquiry group then refined the four pilot proposals using the TWOCAGES heuristic to better understand the transformations that were being proposed. Next, logical steps achieving the improvements were discussed and turned into an action plan, or in systems language, a Human Activity System (HAS) diagram. These HAS diagrams outline the early courses of action for each group.

In between Workshop 4 and 5 members of each co-inquiry group met to further develop their proposals and create their presentations.

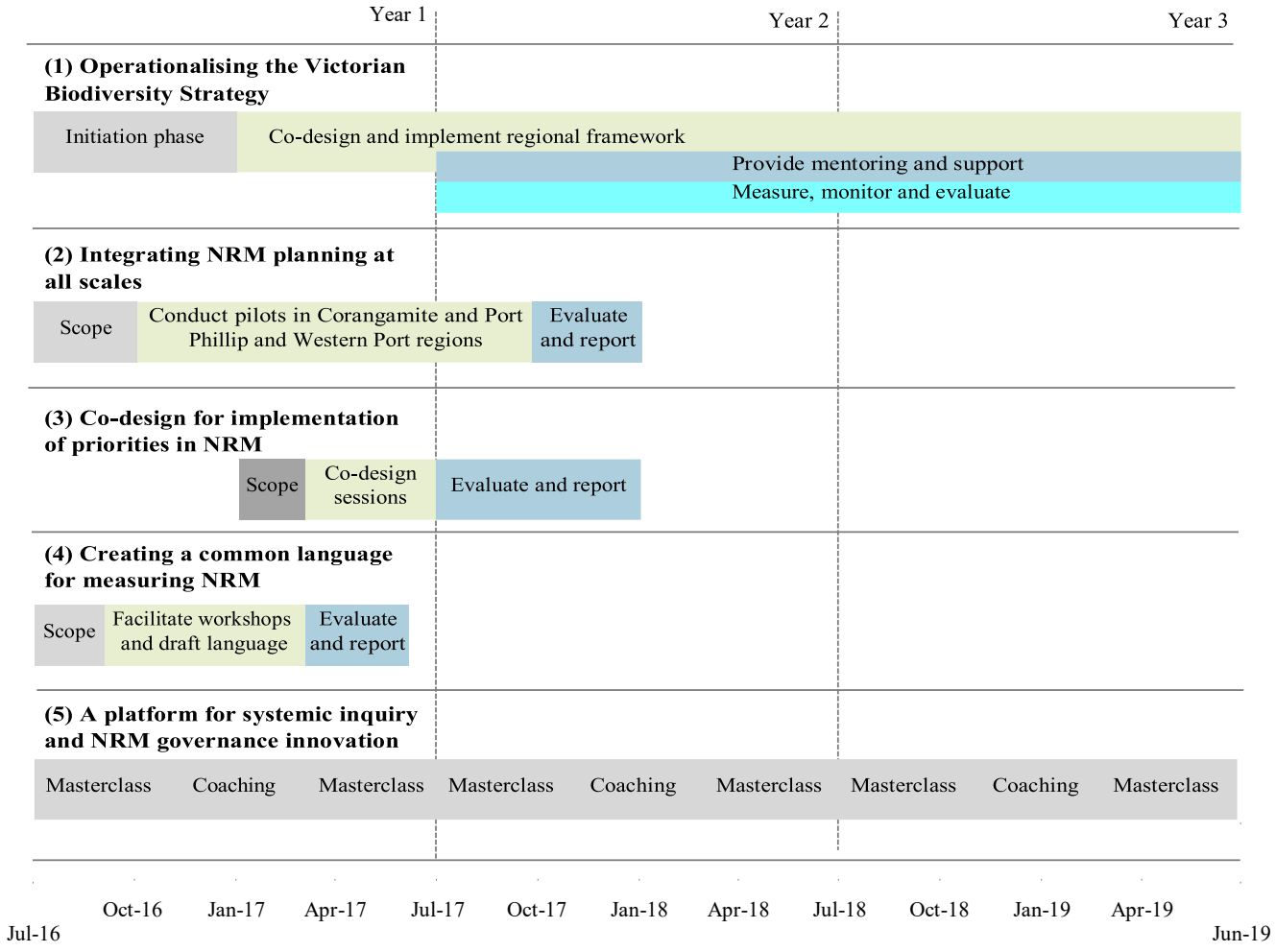
At **Workshop 5** (2nd March 2016), each group made further refinements and then practiced pitching their proposals to the whole Lonsdale Systems Group. Twenty-one participants provided critical feedback to strengthen each proposal and find areas of connection between them. Summaries of each proposal can be found on the following pages. All pilot proposals are based on the principle of co-design.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Overall budget

Activity	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
(1) Operationalising the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy	46,000	46,000	46,000
(2) Integrating NRM planning at all scales	79,300	40,000	-
(3) Co-design for implementation of priorities in NRM	48,140	9,600	-
(4) Creating a common language for measuring NRM	38,360	-	-
TOTAL INVESTMENT REQUIRED	**211,800**	**95,600**	**46,000**
In-kind contributions (approx.)	287,200	110,000	70,000
ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT SOUGHT			
(5) A platform for systemic inquiry	100,000	100,000	100,000

Overall timeline



1 EARTH TO HUMANS: OPERATIONALISING THE VICTORIAN BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY IN URBAN COMMUNITIES

1.1 SUMMARY

This pilot will test a process for involving urban Victorians in connecting with and taking care of biodiversity. The pilot coordinates and leverages expertise in urban environmental management at grass roots, municipal, regional and state levels to co-design a regional framework for projects that involve unengaged urban residents to connect with and take care of biodiversity. The co-design process offers a way to make the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy matter to urban Victorians and underpin sustained community dialogue and action.

Anticipated outcomes of this pilot include acknowledging and giving legitimacy to the importance of urban nature conservation, actively involving urban communities in caring for their biodiversity, and making the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy a relevant and living document.

Participants

Laura Mumaw (RMIT University; Victorian Environment Friends Network), Nadine Gaskell (Knox Council), Irene Kelly (Knox Environment Society), Ian Morgans, Rebecca Koss, Sarah Maclagen (Port Phillip and Westernport CMA), Ray Ison (The Open University, UK), Helen Corney (RMIT, Burke Road Billabong Reserve), Larry Price, Adam Muir (DELWP).

Location

Urban areas in Victoria

Duration

3 years, 2016-19

1.2 BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Conserving urban species and habitats requires collaborative action by various land managers across a local landscape. Residents can support the conservation work of public land managers by removing environmental weeds, cultivating indigenous flora, and preserving or adding habitat like nest hollows on their own land (known as wildlife gardening). Developing the motivation and capacity of residents to foster their local biodiversity is an important step, nested within an embracing and empowering vision of land stewardship that values each piece of urban land and its landholder.

Importantly, gardening is an activity that many residents across demographics - of age, income, and culture, and as families, children or other residential groupings – can and do engage in. It offers opportunities for hands-on stewardship at home, where one has personal control and responsibility.

Various councils in greater Melbourne and regional Victorian townships are interested in developing residential biodiversity stewardship programs but feel constrained by the perceived challenges of high cost, resourcing and lack of mentorship or linkages. At the heart of this concept is collaboration between council and community; developing residents' connections with place and community; sharing learning; and fostering nature.

The successful working model for this initiative, Knox Gardens for Wildlife (G4W), is a collaboration between Knox City Council and Knox Environment Society. G4W engages residents and local businesses to wildlife garden as part of a municipal effort to conserve indigenous flora and fauna. It continues to grow, with over 600 households throughout the municipality. Key program elements include an on-site garden assessment, an indigenous plant nursery hub, visible involvement of council and community, and a locally based framework that fosters experiential learning and endorses the value of each garden's contribution.

What the Biodiversity Strategy calls for

The Victorian Government's draft Protecting Victoria's Environment- Biodiversity 2036 seeks to identify the tools, tasks and roles needed to engage Victorians in valuing biodiversity and fostering it in the face of climate change and population growth (p7*). It helps to fulfil Australia's commitments to the Convention on Biological Diversity, including a goal of using "participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building" (p8).

The Biodiversity Strategy calls for:

- Increasing the number of Victorians acting to protect nature (p21);
- Alignment of public and private land management actions (p16);
- Supporting land managers to work together to maintain biodiversity, share information, support adaptive management (p17);
- Creating more opportunities for involvement of private landholders (p17);
- Supporting existing Landcare and conservation groups to make it easier for people to participate in private land conservation (p17);
- Valuing and encouraging voluntary community contributions (p28);
- Engaging citizens and communities to work together to ensure that our various contributions to protecting biodiversity are complementary and aligned to a common purpose (p28).

These are laudable goals and we commend them. What are lacking are specific, tangible opportunities to develop and enact the goals on the ground, particularly in urban

* Page numbers from Word version of Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2036 – Public Consultation Draft March 2016

environments, where almost 90% of Australians live (city and regional).

In response to Consultation question 15 (p41): "In addition to existing programs, are there any other ways to help Victorian communities and local government agencies promote and create a healthy and biodiverse natural environment at local and regional levels?" - We suggest a way for community groups and local government agencies to leverage existing programs to increase the number of urban Victorians acting to protect nature, on their land, working with public land managers and affiliated Friends of groups. It addresses each of the preceding Biodiversity Strategy objectives in one integrated mechanism suited to urban environments.

Innovative attributes

A distinguishing feature of this proposal is the promotion of community group-local government collaborations as hubs for local residential biodiversity conservation programs. Collaborations can generate trust and relationships between residents, program volunteers and involved organisations that provide a shared focus on local biodiversity, community needs and aspirations, and opportunities for mutual support (as evidenced in the Knox program[†]). The focus and relationships radiate outwards to the networks of all the participants, building community resilience and linkages.

This proposal is distinctive also in seeking not only to foster indigenous biodiversity, but also to understand and strengthen participants' wellbeing and connections with place and community as a result of their involvement. Members of the Knox Gardens for Wildlife program have expressed wellbeing as a result of their participation[‡]. The wellbeing comes from immersion in nature, learning new knowledge and skills, and making a worthwhile contribution to native biodiversity with other community members. New residents have said their involvement helps them feel a part of their new community. Participants also express closer ties with council, the Knox Environment Society, and other program members.

A third unique feature of this initiative is involving local business owners as contributing land managers and active partners. Many businesses want to contribute to the local community in which they do business. Opportunities to practice corporate social responsibility are increasingly being sought through local government agencies. By fostering indigenous flora and fauna on their grounds as part of municipal programs like these, businesses can support local biodiversity, improve urban amenity, establish relationships with local government and community groups, and inform and connect employees to the local natural environment.

Who will benefit from this work?

- Council biodiversity and community engagement staff interested in implementing or strengthening indigenous biodiversity stewardship programs;
- Community groups seeking to foster residential biodiversity stewardship;
- Indigenous plant nurseries and networks;
- Urban residents and local businesses involved or wishing to be involved in improving the environment or conserving native biodiversity;
- Agencies and statutory authorities responsible for developing and implementing biodiversity and catchment management strategies;
- The community as a whole through:
  - improved habitat and persistence of indigenous species;

[†] Mumaw & Bekessy (2017). Wildlife gardening for collaborative public-private native biodiversity conservation. *Australasian Journal of Environmental Management.* 24(3), 242–260.

[‡] Gaskell 2016. Reconnecting people with Nature. *Australasian Parks and Leisure Community and Urban Planning.*

- citizens interested and involved in caring for nature;
- improved community knowledge, skills, materials (e.g. indigenous plants) and networks for conserving native biodiversity;
- community wellbeing and linkages (see link for 2-3 min case studies of the impact on participants).

1.3 PILOT DETAILS

The purpose of this pilot is to establish a regional framework that supports urban councils and community groups to involve residents in conserving biodiversity by providing habitat for indigenous biota in their gardens and/or business premises.

We offer a proposal that addresses a number of goals of the Biodiversity Strategy in one integrated mechanism suited to urban environments. It consists of fostering native biodiversity stewardship by urban residents on their land as part of participatory and capacity building community partnerships.

Main objectives

1. Actively involving urban communities in caring for their biodiversity;
2. Making the Victorian Biodiversity Strategy a relevant and living document.

Targeted outcomes

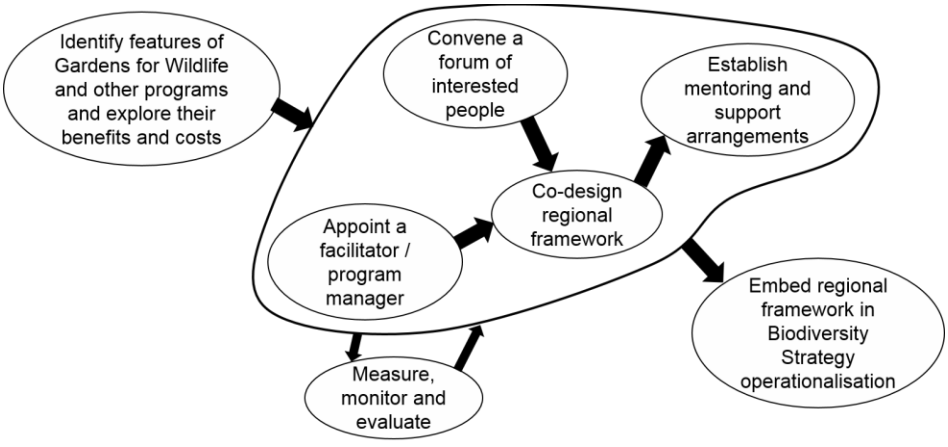
1. Improved habitat and connectivity for local species in urban environments
2. Community hubs of state agencies, local govt, local env groups, and residents collaborating to conserve native biodiversity through aligned public-private land management
3. Community biodiversity champions
4. Increased number of urban residents engaged in private land conservation
5. New and strengthened urban community linkages around caring for native biodiversity
6. Documented wellbeing benefits for participants through caring for nature
7. Improved community capacity to care for native biodiversity

Insights and recommendations from this pilot proposal will be made for policy development, performance indicators for monitoring and measuring social and ecological outcomes, and the practicalities of developing municipal residential biodiversity stewardship programs.

1.4 ACTION PLAN

Analyse data from successful programs

Building on a successful and unique wildlife gardening partnership in Knox municipality, this pilot engages local residents, businesses, and public land managers to work together to



Proposed phases of activity

improve habitat for biodiversity across a community landscape.

The first step is to conduct research that investigates and disseminates findings from the Gardens for Wildlife and other programs about improvements in social linkages, community capacity building, and wellbeing benefits for participants. It will also establish measures of performance for the pilot.

Appoint a facilitator or program manager

In scoping this proposal, the participants have identified a need to appoint a facilitator to manage the day-to-day work involved in the pilot. This work would involve identifying nodes of relevant expertise, building and supporting relationships, sourcing and managing materials and resources, organising events, and keeping records of the process.

Convene a regional forum of interested people

The facilitator will work with participants to build relationships, share methods and materials for developing residential biodiversity stewardship programs, foster a process for developing and monitoring results with advice from affiliated researchers, and coordinate development of a strategy and resourcing for a sustainable regional framework.

Communication will be maintained among this group, including via distribution lists, newsletters, and online forums.

Co-design a regional framework

Through workshops and other event formats involving environmental community groups, indigenous plant nurseries, DELWP staff, and local governments responsible for urban/township populations, this pilot will develop strategy, funding and resourcing mechanisms to facilitate the co-design of wildlife gardening programs. This co-design will provide the required flexibility to ensure that programs are targeted to specific community, demographic and environmental parameters allowing it to be successfully implemented across the region.

Establish mentoring and support arrangements

Peer-mentoring and support will be provided to groups, agencies, businesses and individuals wanting to establish wildlife gardening programs in their local area.

Measure, monitor and evaluate

Throughout the pilot, participants will develop and refine performance measures and processes for assessing progress against these measures with input from affiliated researchers. Case study reports of selected projects will be written up, and recommendations made for future Victorian Biodiversity Strategy operationalisation and refinement, including the practicalities of developing municipal residential biodiversity stewardship programs.

1.5 TIMELINE

Activity	Duration
Initiation Phase: Identify features of Gardens for Wildlife and other programs and explore their benefits and costs. Appoint or recruit a person with relevant expertise to facilitate. Convene a regional forum of interested people from metropolitan Melbourne and other urban localities in Victoria.	6 months
Co-design and implement regional framework: Through face-to-face gatherings, participants in the regional forum will develop and strengthen a regional framework for projects that involve unengaged urban residents to connect with and take care of biodiversity.	30 months
Mentoring and support: Establish arrangements for peer-mentoring and providing start-up support to participants who want to design new programs.	24 months, commencing year 2
Measure, monitor and evaluate: Participants report back on implementation results. Co-design performance measures and processes and implement. Write up case study reports for the pilot and make recommendations for future Victorian Biodiversity Strategy operationalisation and refinement.	24 months, commencing year 2

1.6 BUDGET AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Research phase	In-kind support	-	-
Initial forum facilitation	PPWCMA / DELWP	-	-
Facilitator (approx. 3 years @$36,000 pa direct costs)	$36,000	$36,000	$36,000
Operating costs (workshops, travel support, etc)	$10,000 + in-kind support from framework participants	$10,000 + in-kind support from framework participants	$10,000 + in-kind support from framework participants
TOTAL INVESTMENT REQUIRED	**$46,000**	**$46,000**	**$46,000**
In-kind contributions	$70,000 approx	$70,000 approx	$70,000 approx

2 INTEGRATING NRM PLANNING AT ALL SCALES

2.1 SUMMARY

This pilot will test a process for integrating natural resource management (NRM) planning across local, regional and state scales in two Victorian regions. The pilot coordinates and leverages expertise in using the *NRM Planning Portal*, developed by the Corangamite CMA with the Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation, and *Conservation Action Planning*, applied by the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA, and seeks to demonstrate ways of meaningfully involving community in planning. The co-designed process offers a way that each region can develop their next Regional Catchment Strategy.

Anticipated outcomes of this pilot include an improved approach to engaging communities in local and regional priority setting, allocating and leveraging investments in water, biodiversity and climate change in regions, and enhancing coordination across local, regional and state scales, with broad ownership of the process.

2.1.1 Participants

Kaye Rodden and Ian Maclagan (Victorian Landcare Council), Luisa Perez-Mujica (Charles Sturt University), David Curry (Otway Agroforestry Network), Chris Pitfield (Corangamite CMA), Doug Evans and Ian Morgans (Port Phillip and Westernport CMA), Lea-Anne Bradley (Helen Macpherson Smith Trust), Adam Hood (DELWP), Peter Dahlhaus (Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation) and Philip Wallis (Monash University)

2.1.2 Location

Corangamite and Port Phillip and Western Port regions

2.1.3 Duration

18 months, 2016-18

2.2 BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

This partnership between government, community, philanthropic and university participants represents a strong interest across local, regional and state-level NRM to integrate planning across scales. The group has been meeting for 12 months under the banner of the Lonsdale Systems Group's collaborative inquiry into improving NRM governance in Victoria.

The Victorian Government's 'Our Catchments, Our Communities' strategy emphasises stronger connections between state, regional and local planning for land, water and biodiversity. Ensuring local communities are engaged in planning and priority setting, safeguarding the alignment and complementarity of planning at all levels, as well as working in close consultation with regional organisations and communities are three of the main challenges for integrated planning according to the strategy.

Our proposal directly addresses these challenges by piloting a process designed to enable those involved in NRM at all scales to be involved in setting and agreeing to investment priorities, as well as explicitly acknowledging and accommodating differences. The proposed approach will also support integrated planning and investment across different environmental and social domains, aligning with the forthcoming Biodiversity Strategy, Water Plan and Climate Change Framework.

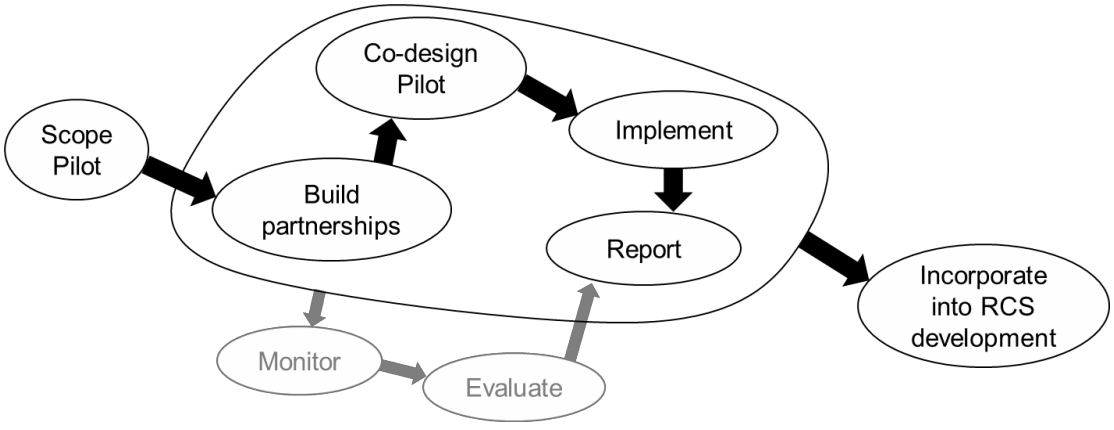
The pilot draws on experience and expertise in two existing initiatives: first, the NRM Planning Portal, an online spatial tool developed for Corangamite CMA by the Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation at Federation University, which enables planning priorities to be spatially represented at any scale, and second, use of the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation (aka Catchment Action Planning) with Landcare communities, a 'best practice' systematic and participatory process for conservation planning, and adaptive management and decision-making. The group also has demonstrated expertise in co-design processes, which will ensure that the pilot integrates CAP and the Planning Portal for setting NRM priorities. Together, these initiatives combine in a way that represents an innovation in NRM planning, bringing conversations through from local, to regional and state levels.

2.3 PILOT DETAILS

The purpose of this pilot is to develop a trial that facilitates all NRM voices to influence integrating NRM planning across scales.

Main objectives

1. Facilitate meaningful conversations among NRM participants around NRM priority-setting
2. Use planning tools (e.g. NRM Planning Portal), the latest state-held NRM data, and best practice design processes to make NRM priorities clear at each level



Proposed phases of activity – the four grouped circles are the pilot

Targeted outcomes

1. Transform to a situation where planning directs funding, not where funding directs planning
2. Meaningful contributions from the NRM community at all scales into the renewal and refinement of RCSs, and regional funding allocation decision-making

2.4 ACTION PLAN

Scope pilot

Significant progress has already been achieved in this phase over 12 months, enabled by the systemic co-inquiry into NRM governance. The current set of participants has worked through five workshops to discuss and design the rationale, purpose and general approach of the pilot. Once funding is secured, a scoping workshop is proposed to plan the pilot in more detail.

Build partnerships

The purpose of this phase of the pilot is to expand the partnership to include community representatives from the two pilot regions (likely to be the Southern Otway Landcare Network in the Corangamite region, and the Nillumbik Landcare Network in the Port Phillip and Western Port region), as well as staff from both CMAs, CeRDI (at Federation University), and DELWP. The outcomes of this phase include: a pilot steering committee will be formalised, funding agreements and contracting between partners will be established, and appointment or recruitment of positions will commence. Established Landcare Facilitators will be approached to add a day per week to be involved in the pilot, with the advantage that they have strong existing networks.

Co-design pilot

This phase will be conducted in parallel with the partnership-building phase. Firstly, some background research will be conducted to support the design of a process incorporating CAP and the Planning Portal. Secondly, regional co-design workshops will be held in each of the two pilot regions to contextualise the process and commence monitoring and evaluation activities. The outcomes of this phase include: agreement on detailed designs and methods of stakeholder participation, as well as timelines for implementing trials in each of the two pilot regions and monitoring and evaluations frameworks.

Implement

In this phase the pilot will be implemented in two different regional contexts, as described below. Both the NRM Planning Portal process and CAP will take approximately six months to complete.

Port Phillip and Western Port

The Catchment Action Planning (CAP) process has already been used to good effect across six sub-regions of Port Phillip and Western Port, enabling Landcare network and group representatives to (primarily at the landscape scale) identify shared environmental assets and critical threats and their causes, and decide on strategies and actions to achieve measurable goals. This pilot will trial the use of the Planning Portal to spatially visualise assets and priority actions identified at different scales (property to state), and then use this to inform a conversation about where the overlaps are and where joint priorities might be agreed. This trial, likely to be located in the Nillumbik Landcare Network region, will build upon the planning and decision-making undertaken to date by reaching out to a wider audience of stakeholders (from property to state levels), using the consistent process and language provided by CAP, capture this with the Planning Portal, and then engage them in collaborative decision-making that aims to integrate planning across local, regional and state scales.

Corangamite

The NRM Planning Portal has already been used in two sub-regions in Corangamite, with a goal to use it across all 16 sub-regions, including the trial area. Currently, the NRM

Planning Portal does not have an 'established' community engagement process. This pilot will trial a community engagement process based on CAP, in conjunction with the Planning Portal, to identify priorities and embed them into local-regional planning initiatives. In the CAP process, participants map out local assets, and consider how impacts can be measured. Then they identify threats, and consider what they're trying to achieve by reducing impact of the threats. Actions are then mapped, and this is where the Portal comes into play. The pilot is likely to be located in the Southern Otway Landcare Network region.

In both regions, additional participatory processes will be co-designed and implemented to ensure the integration CAP and the Planning Portal as well as the inclusion of the different voices in NRM planning.

Report

Drawing on monitoring and evaluation data and the outcomes of each sub-regional pilot, recommendations for adopting this approach into future RCS development across Victoria will be determined.

2.5 TIMELINE

Activity	Duration
Scope pilot: explore specific locations within Port Phillip and Western Port and Corangamite regions to run pilot, identify possible partners (1 scoping workshop).	In progress
Build partnerships: gauge enthusiasm and formalise partnerships in regions and locations of interest, including different NRM groups and institutions.	3 months
Co-design pilot: conduct background research and hold 2 regional workshops to co-design the pilot process contextualised to each region, and develop M&E.	
Implement: conduct pilots (6 local meetings and 1 regional workshop, per region) in regions, collect participant reflections from workshops, interviews and surveys	12 months
Report: evaluation, write up case study reports for the pilot and make recommendations for future RCS development (1 evaluation/design workshop).	3 months

2.6 BUDGET AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Item	2016/17	2017/18
Landcare Facilitator salaries	$30,000	$10,000
Consultant fees (Facilitator, CeRDI, CAP Facilitator)	$25,000	$20,000
Operating costs (workshops, travel support, etc)	$24,300	$10,000
TOTAL INVESTMENT REQUIRED	**$79,300**	**$40,000**
In-kind Contributions (CCMA, PPWCMA, DELWP, CeRDI, Landcare Networks, other NRM stakeholders)	$110,000 approx	$40,000 approx

3 CO-DESIGN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITIES IN NRM

3.1 SUMMARY

Pilot and document a process of co-design of in-region programs of action for implementation of agreed priorities. Negotiate agreement with CMA staff, regional stakeholders and community organisations on the scale and focus of design. Support co-design teams with systemic inquiry tools and facilitation through working sessions over a 6 month period. Support participants between sessions, and follow and evaluate impacts of the design process for a further 9 months.

This pilot will remedy the absence of models of participation after agreement on priorities and before delivery of on-ground activities. Anticipated outcomes are smarter program designs, with more buy-in from all parties and more flexibility in delivery.

3.1.1 Participants

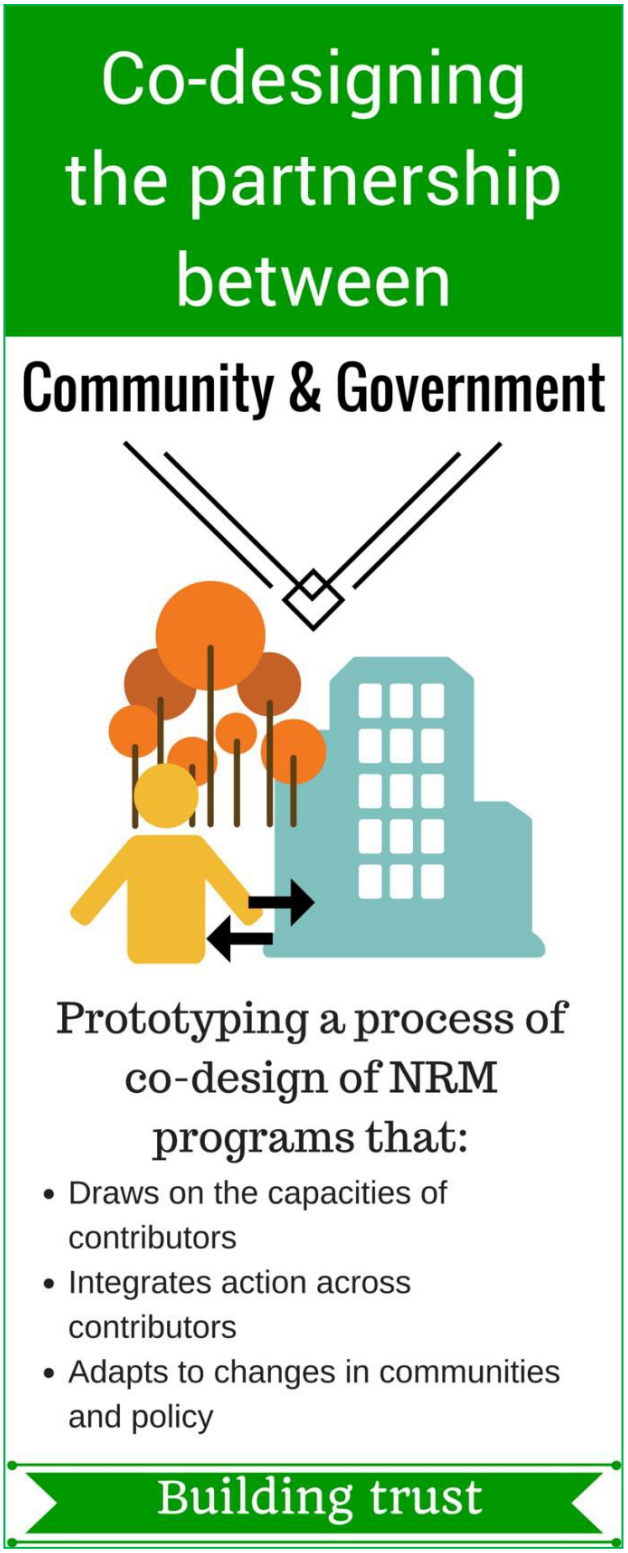
Mike Nurse and Libby Riches (Southern Otway Landcare Network), Mandy Baker (Upper Barwon Landcare Network), Tamara Boyd (Intrinsic Scope), Jane Jobe (PPW CMA Board), Anthony Hooper (Natural Resources Conservation League), Dale Watson (DELWP), Alice Knight (Corangamite CMA), Beth Mellick (Norman Wettenhall Foundation), Brian Coffey (RMIT), and Ross Colliver (Lonsdale Systems Group)

3.1.2 Location

Corangamite and Port Phillip and Western Port regions

3.1.3 Duration

18 months



3.2 BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Local people committed to improving their local environment want to work with government natural resource managers around community priorities. *Our Catchment, Our Communities* promises to "put community and stakeholder participation in decision-making and on-ground activities at the centre of our efforts." There is improving consultation on regional priorities, but when priorities are implemented, community NRM organisations 'partnership' are often on the receiving end of decisions made elsewhere. Some community groups have been content to be a passive receiver of program planning, and have been slow to improve their own planning, project management and data collection. However, others have good internal systems and long-standing partnerships with industry groups, local government and philanthropic organisations.

The 'integrating NRM planning at all scales' proposal (see Section 2) focuses on ways to involve communities in *setting priorities.* Innovation is also needed in the mechanisms of *implementation.* Co-design of the actions to implement agreed priorities will generate **smarter programs** (that can more readily influence communities and that integrate private and public effort), with **more buy-in** (mobilising each contributors' strengths and reinforcing the motivation to work for landscape health), and **more flexibility** (adapting to unanticipated changes in funding, policy and communities). **Stronger trust** between community and government will drive down the cost of organising implementation.

3.3 PILOT DETAILS

The purpose of this pilot is to prototype a process of co-design of implementation of NRM priorities.

Main objectives

The objectives are to:

1. Identify the scale (region/landscape zone/locality) and focus (all assets/one asset) at which it is feasible to bring together NRM contributors to design for investment priorities
2. Negotiate a process of co-design between contributors
3. Take account of readiness in communities and government programs, and negotiate roles of parties
4. Build evaluation of multiple outcomes into design of actions
5. Identify the capacities needed to participate in co-design

Targeted outcomes

1. Steps for co-design that can be applied to most NRM situations
2. Smarter programs, that are more effective in influencing landholders and in integrating private and public effort
3. More buy-in, with more effective use of contributors' strengths and reinforcement of the motivation to work for landscape health
4. More flexibility in adapting to changes in funding, policy and communities
5. Greater trust between community and government

3.4 PROJECT STAGES AND BUDGET

Co-design is a facilitated process of systemic inquiry, that identifies what's limiting in current arrangements, sets out essential activities of a better design, then decides where changes are needed, monitoring and adapting as changes are implemented.

Negotiate scope

In collaboration with Corangamite CMA, we will conduct a stock-take of current and past ways that implementation has been planned, for different asset programs, assessing strengths and limitations, from the point of view of CMA and Landcare.

An initial agreement has been reached with Corangamite CMA and Southern Otway Landcare Network to focus on the Aire and Otways Coast Landscape Zones, and to use

agreed priorities as identified in the NRM Planning Portal process, which the CCMA will run with SOLN July-December 2016. The pilot will facilitate discussion of what each party wants to get out of the co-design pilot, the specific assets to be targeted, the other NRM contributors they want to bring into the process, and the choice of members of a co-design team.

With that core design team, the pilot will draft a set of steps for co-design, with estimates of time required, and negotiate the principles that should guide the way they work together. Commitments of funding and staff time required will benegotiated.

Co-design sessions

The co-design sessions will be timetabled over 4 months. The pilot consultant will plan for each session, organise participants and venue, facilitate the co-design sessions, and document after each what has been agreed in the design, and learnings about the co-design process. Documentation will be fed back to the co-design team as part of reflection and improvement of the emerging design.

Provide support between workshops

Support will be provided for the co-design team between sessions, to maintain momentum as they test, with their colleagues and their constituency, the feasibility and appropriateness of the emerging design for action to implement the target priorities.

Evaluate and report

Evaluation will draw conclusions on the immediate impact of the pilot in relation to the agreed design, with reference to the pilot objectives, and propose a stepped process of co-design of broad relevant to NRM. Results will be communicated to CMAs and Landcare Networks and the community NRM sector.

3.5 TIMELINE

Activity	Duration
Negotiate scope with contributors	2 months
Facilitate co-design sessions	4 months
Evaluate and report	6 months

3.6 BUDGET AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Item	2016/17	2017/18
Negotiate scope	$11,520	-
Co-design sessions	$15,360	-
Provide support between workshops, Phone calls, discussion on-site, small meetings	$5,760	-
Support for participation of Landcare staff and members	$9,000	-
Travel and venue costs	$6,500	-
Evaluation and communication	$48,140	$9,600
TOTAL INVESTMENT REQUIRED	**$48,140**	**$9,600**
In-kind Contributions (CCMA, PPWCMA, DELWP, CeRDI, Landcare Networks, other NRM stakeholders)	$52,000 approx	-

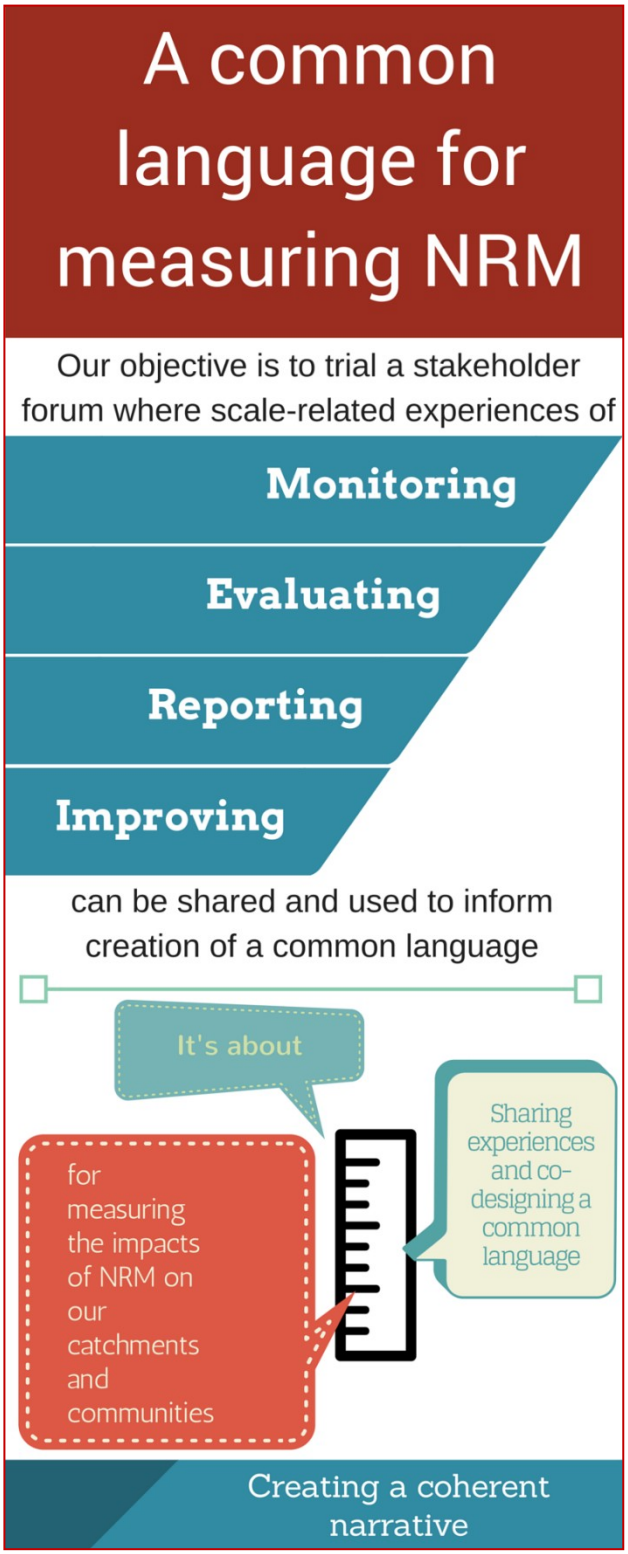
4 CREATING A COMMON LANGUAGE FOR MEASURING NRM

4.1 SUMMARY

NRM guides planning and investing in land and water assets, to generate and enhance benefits from their ecological services. Measuring the change in condition of those assets enables us to assess impacts of and adapt NRM activity to enable better outcomes. Measuring and reporting is constrained however, due to scale-related, unresolved differences in how we do and measure NRM.

We propose co-creating a common language for use in measuring and reporting on the impact of NRM. People operating at four governance scales (local, sub-regional, regional and state) will share their way of thinking about and doing NRM and explore their language for measuring and reporting on NRM. A deeper appreciation of similarities and differences, in language and meaning, will emerge and underpin the co-design of a common language.

Anticipated outcomes include coherence in the way we think and talk about NRM across scales; a cohesive narrative for communicating the impacts and benefits of NRM; improved capability for adaptive NRM; and, justifying and accounting for investment.



4.1.1 Participants

Peter Greig (Corangamite Landcare), Bret Ryan (CCMA), Rebecca Koss (PPWCMA), Vural Yazgin, Mark Eigenraam and Dale Watson (DELWP), Karyn Bosomworth (RMIT), Scott Rawlings (CfES), Neil Meyers (VCMC), Moragh Mackay (Facilitator - CSU)

4.1.2 Location

Corangamite and Port Phillip and Western Port regions – possibly Goulburn Broken

4.1.3 Duration

1 year, 2016-17

4.2 Background and justification

The NRM sector is made up of a diverse range of players, who need to coordinate activities to maximise environmental outcomes from increasingly limited budgets.

One of the key challenges is the language used to describe the environment and how project and program performance reporting occurs. There are multiple agencies, each using different language for planning, investment and reporting, or sometimes the same language with different meaning. Grassroots community groups find government accounting of environmental outcomes confusing and difficult to apply to their work. The common experience is one of speaking at cross purposes.

Players at each level of scale plan, monitor, evaluate and report on inputs, outputs and outcomes differently. Each scale has distinct purposes for undertaking NRM activities and language to describe those activities, a diversity of language that is further complicated by the differing reporting systems of multiple funding programs.

Lack of a common language undermines negotiation of goals and coordination of effort across the sector, makes it difficult to offer a coherent narrative around impacts, and hampers the potential to leverage interest and investment from government and philanthropic organisations and community. The recent System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) provides a framework for the NRM community to re-examine the language they use and build a consistent and coherent approach to communicating activities and outcomes with others in and out of the NRM sector. The SEEA includes guidance on a process for different entities to develop a common language that still meets the accountability needs of each entity.

Four facilitated workshops will bring people together to interpret and adapt the SEEA principles and methods and draft a common language that is meaningful at all scales. Systemic Inquiry methods will aid facilitation of these discussions in and between the workshops to mitigate the experience of speaking at cross purposes. Systems methods help by making explicit the scale at which we are acting within a systemic view of NRM. Describing the why, what and how of what we do at each of these levels of scale then enables us to move up and down the levels in a coherent way, freeing us to explore scale appropriate language and how this translates across scales without confusion.

4.3 Project initiation

Participants from government, community, philanthropic and university sectors have collectively initiated identification of these challenges and mapped a pathway for improving the way we communicate about NRM activities. They have collectively designed this trial and written this proposal. The group has met for 12 months within the Lonsdale Systems Group's collaborative inquiry into improving NRM governance in Victoria.

Emerging Victorian Government guidance, including the Framework for Catchment Condition and Management Reporting which responds to the findings and recommendations of the Victorian Auditor General's Office inquiry into the Effectiveness of Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs), provide the focus and opportunity to assess the current lack of coherence in NRM practices and language used, particularly between government agencies and community groups. Other institutional mechanisms that provide further settings for assessing coherence in this field are the Valuing and accounting for Victoria's environment: Strategic Plan 2015-2020, the State of the Environment and State of the Bays reporting processes by the Office of Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability and the Catchment Condition Reporting undertaken by the Victorian Catchment Management Council and CMAs. People involved in each

of these processes have contributed ideas and suggestions to this proposal.

4.4 PILOT DETAILS

The purpose of this pilot is to improve communication across NRM scales by co-designing a common language, to enable creation of a joined up narrative about the benefits and impact of NRM activities.

Main objectives

1. Facilitate purposeful conversations amongst people at all scales of NRM to explore language, thinking and meaning at each scale and reveal barriers to communication
2. Apply SEEA Guiding principles and Systemic Inquiry methods to enable the co-design of a common language

Targeted outcomes

1. A common language that is meaningful to people at each governance scale
2. Increased coherence in the way we think and talk about NRM
3. Collectively improved performance of our NRM activity and the narrative of our impact

4.5 ACTION PLAN

Co-design through workshops and team member collaborations to take the principles and guidelines contained in the SEEA for the definition of environmental assets (services & benefits) and link with community, local government, regional and State needs.

Phase 1: Preparation

Firstly, we will refine the stakeholder analysis from SI Workshops 2 & 3. Then, we will develop an engagement plan and engage participants willing to put a common language into practice and measure the impact. Program logic, including evaluation measures for this pilot, will be developed. Two workshops will be designed for Phase 2.

Phase 2: Workshops and trial

At Workshop 1, the group will present and discuss SEEA methods and explore how they relate to and can be applied at community, local government, regional and state scales. We will seek feedback from participants on the applicability of the SEEA methods for their reporting purposes (MER, return on investment).

In between workshops, a common language and guide to its use will be drafted from responses at Workshop 1. This will be trialled with people at four scales in two regions and applied in their real life settings.

In Workshop 2, we will jointly evaluate and seek feedback on the draft common language and guide on how it fits with activities and management actions at each scale. We will then refine the language and guide based on participant responses.

Phase 3: Interpret workshop outputs, document and report

A report on workshop results, including a final draft common language will be produced and peer reviewed by a person with relevant expertise external to the co-ordinating group.

The proposed outputs/deliverables include:

- A draft common language and accompanying Guide that can be taken into other regions.
- A project report of the achievements and lessons learned, including next steps.

4.6 TIMELINE

Activity	Duration
Phase 1: Members of this co-inquiry group planning and designing	July-September 2016
Facilitate workshop 1: Exploring language and meaning and initiating co-design of a common language with participants	October 2016
Draft the common language and Guide: liaising further with participants	October – November 2016
Trial use of draft common language and Guide: in real settings with participants at four scales	November 2016 – March 2017
Facilitate Workshop 2: Joint evaluation of processes and outcomes so far to learn from trial experiences	March 2017
Reporting: write up results and make recommendations for next steps	April - May 2017

4.7 BUDGET AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Item	2016/17
Phase 1	$4,800
Phase 2	$18,600
Phase 3	$14,960
TOTAL INVESTMENT REQUIRED	**$38,360**
In-kind contributions: Two CMA staff 8 days over 12 months ($9600 in-kind), four State government staff 8 days over 12 months ($24,000 in-kind), six local government staff 6 days over 12 months ($21,600 in-kind)	$55,200 approx

5 A PLATFORM FOR SYSTEMIC INQUIRY AND NRM GOVERNANCE INNOVATION

5.1 SUMMARY

Existing and emerging co-inquiries require more than funding to continue; individuals need continued access to expertise and coaching. They also need an appropriate 'space' to design new relationships and operational arrangements, and to safely reflect on their emerging practices.

Our proposed platform for systemic co-inquiry and NRM governance innovation will support the people driving current co-inquiries in NRM governance, and enable others to develop new co-inquiries. It will articulate the practices of systemic inquiry, describe processes of co-design emerging in the pilots, explicate concepts and tools, and develop reflection and evaluation strategies.

Anticipated outcomes will be successful implementation of current co-inquiries, and the creation of a design hub for agency and community stakeholders to legitimately co-create future operational and governance arrangements.

5.1.1 Participants

Ray Ison (The Open University, UK), Moragh Mackay (Facilitator), Philip Wallis (Monash University), Ross Colliver (The Training and Development Group), Catherine Allan (Charles Sturt University) plus any or all of our co-inquirers.

5.1.2 Location

Melbourne and virtual

5.1.3 Duration

Up to five years

5.2 Background and justification

The upheaval and apparent change in Natural Resource management and governance in Victoria over the past forty years has, with the clarity of hindsight, been more of a pendulum swing between community participation and top down control. While disenfranchising and disempowering stakeholders, both community and organisational, the swinging pendulum has been unable to substantially improve our management of natural resources, or embed an active long term collective decision making process. The NRM operating space continues to assume linear causality and reductionism, and to preference the 'hard" sciences over social science.

In the emerging 'public purpose' sector, comprising government, business and civil society, how might we change the framing of NRM governance to acknowledge and work within wicked and uncertain contexts? How might we embrace the idea that what is being governed are social systems, not just bio-physical systems, and that the levers of change lie with practices of governing and institutional arrangements? From these questions emerged the Systemic Inquiry into NRM in Victoria.

In parallel with supporting innovators within NRM governance, the Systemic Inquiry has initiated a meta-inquiry that explores the role of design, facilitation and utility of systems tools, techniques and methods in fostering social learning processes across diverse players. Specifically, it asks 'what forms of design and facilitation foster productive social learning processes that result in constructive and continuous collective engagement?' Five systemic inquiry workshops in Melbourne since early 2015 have helped us explore this question. Participants have developed four ongoing co-inquiries, but they have also developed individual and group capacities in systemic practice, and built their confidence in reframing governance within their spheres of influence.

These existing and emerging co-inquiries require more than funding to continue. Individuals innovating in governance need continued access to expertise and coaching, and a 'space' to test and develop new relationships and operational arrangements and to safely reflect on their emerging practices. A platform for systemic co-inquiry will provide this support.

5.3 Pilot details

The purpose is to provide support for Systemic Co-Inquiry.

Main objectives

1. To reflect on and document the practices of co-inquiry, drawing on activities through 2015 and 2016
2. To support the activities of the co-inquiries being initiated in 2016
3. To train and support others to develop and facilitate new co-inquiries

Targeted outcomes

1. To support current co-inquiries in NRM governance moving from concept to piloting and evaluating innovations, and enable others to develop new co-inquiries
2. To provide a design hub for agency and community stakeholders to legitimately co-create future operational and governance arrangements

5.4 Action plan

Participatory and traditional analyses of the reflections will contribute to creation of a training and support platform comprised of:

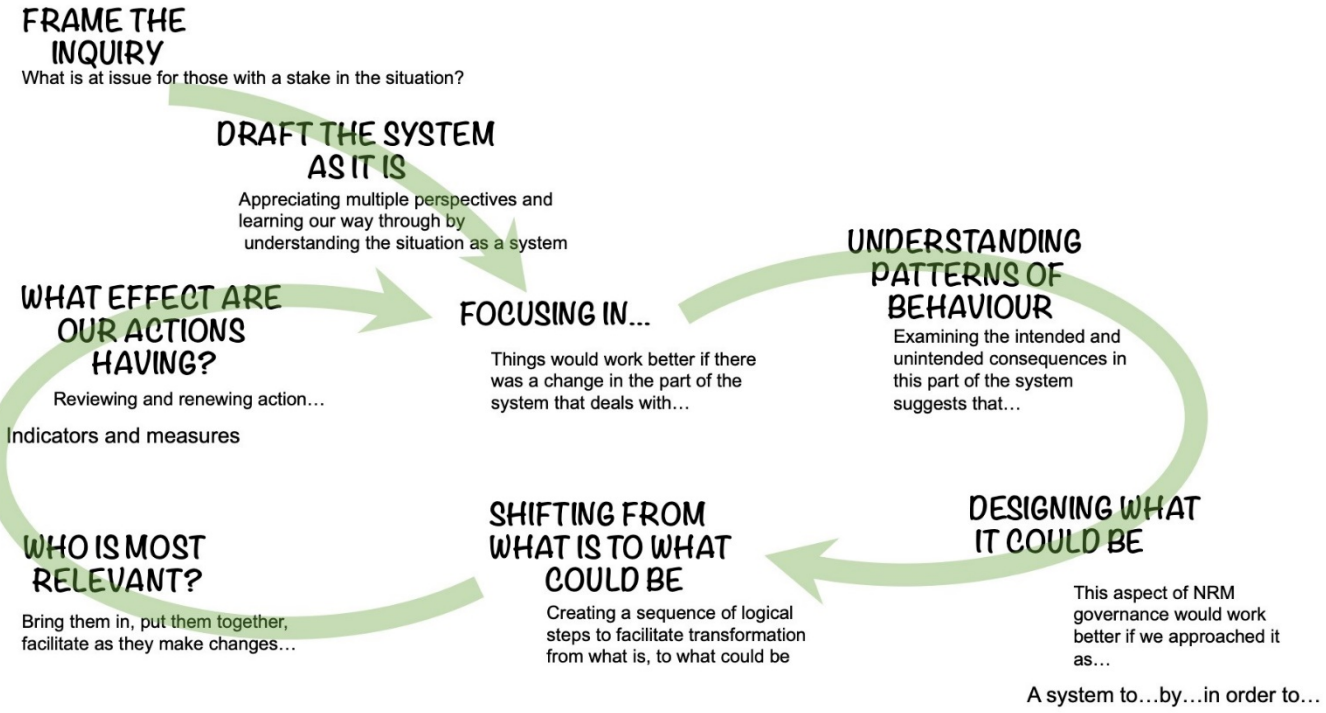
1. Masterclasses (workshop style participatory training augmented with online or hard copy written guides) in: Developing and facilitating systemic co-inquiry; reflective praxis; analysing and documenting the outcomes of systemic co-inquiry
2. Ongoing coaching for systemic co-inquiry practitioners, and graduates of one or more of the Masterclasses.

5.5 TIMELINE

Activity	Duration
Reflection on practice and consolidation of lessons learned	Beginning
Participatory and traditional analyses to design training and support platform	Throughout
Masterclasses	Bi-annual
Ongoing coaching	As needed

5.6 BUDGET AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Project implementation would require a facilitator and office space and equipment to maintain the platform. Budget allocations for each of the researchers/facilitators will be determined once support needs are negotiated with the co-inquiry group participants.



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Institute for Land, Water and Society

PO Box 789
Elizabeth Mitchell Drive
Albury NSW 2640
Australia

Tel: +61 2 6051 9992
Fax: +61 2 6051 9992
Email: ilws@csu.edu.au
www.csu.edu.au/research/ilws